

Department of Health and Senior Services

**STRUCTURED EMPLOYMENT
INTERVIEW METHOD**

(Please refer to Section 5.2 of the Administrative Manual regarding Structured Interviews.)

STRUCTURED EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW METHOD

PURPOSE: The purpose of the structured employment interview method is to provide a means of assuring that interview questions are job-related, that all applicants interviewed for a specific position are asked the same questions and are rated on the same criteria.

INSTRUCTIONS: Preparing structured interview questions is a two-step process.

The first step is to prepare the:

EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW PLAN. Pull both the position description and the performance planning and appraisal forms for the position.

1. **Column A (Essential Duties).** List the essential duties/responsibilities of the position in Column A. These should be based on the information contained in the Position Description Form as well as the Employee Performance Planning and Appraisal forms for the position. If they are inaccurate or incomplete, revised forms should be prepared.
2. **Column B (KSAs).** List knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform the duties of the position. These should be tied to the essential duties in Column A.
3. **Column C (Special Job Requirements).** List any special job requirements such as travel, work schedules, ability to lift heavy objects, etc. List any licensure, registration or certification requirements. These special requirements need to be essential functions without which the person cannot do the job.

The second step is to prepare the:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RATING SHEET

1. **Identifying Information.** Enter class title and position number. Date of interview and interviewer's name are entered at the time of the interview.
2. **Special Job Requirements.** Enter special job requirements from Column C of the Employment Interview Plan.
3. **Education and Experience.** Enter desirable education and experience for the position. This may be the same as the minimum qualifications on the job specification or may be education and experience more directly related to the specific position.

4. Interview Questions. Enter questions that are designed to gather further information about the applicant's background, knowledge, skills and abilities as they relate to the position.
5. Expected Responses. Enter elements or points which you expect applicant to include in answering the questions. These can be brief notations.
6. Rating Scale. A five-point scale (*already contained on the form*) that will indicate the degree to which a candidate answered the question.

Performance Exercises/Tests

If filling a position that involves the type of work that would allow you to evaluate skill levels through a performance exercise/test, it can be a valuable tool in assisting with finding the strongest applicant for the job. Performance exercises/tests can consist of a written exercise, excel spreadsheet exercise, letter composition, mathematical test, etc.

Performance exercises/tests need to have a fair and consistent method of scoring.

If using a performance exercise/test, you must submit it, along with the rating scale, to the OHR for approval.

In conjunction with preparing interview questions, you will need to:

- a. Select the Interviewers. The interview panel should consist of at least three supervisory/management staff. If the position requires technical or professional expertise which the immediate supervisor does not possess, a non-supervisory staff member with that expertise could serve as a co-interviewer after consultation with the OHR. Individuals serving on the interview panel are required to complete the "Selection Interviewer Signature Sheet". All interviewers are encouraged to read the "Instructions for Participants of Interview Panels".
- b. Select the Interview Site. The interview should be conducted in a room that provides privacy and freedom from distractions and interruptions.
- c. Determine the Length of Interview. The length of interview will be determined by the number and type of interview questions. For most positions, thirty to forty-five minutes is sufficient to obtain enough information about an applicant to form an impression of his/her ability. For some jobs, more or less time may be needed. It is important to ask each applicant all the interview questions. If the interviewer does not control talkative applicants, then there will not be equal information on which to evaluate the applicants.

- d. Approval of Interview Questions. Interview questions need to be reviewed and approved by the Office of Human Resources (OHR). The OHR will review questions for other positions as requested.

During the interview, you will need to:

1. Establish rapport with the applicant. This can be achieved by making friendly introductions and by encouraging some polite small talk. It is important to establish rapport in order to reduce the level of anxiety in the applicant. A relaxed applicant will feel free to discuss his/her qualifications more openly and with greater confidence.
2. Provide the applicant information about the position. The applicant should be provided the following information:
 - a. General description of the position, location, hours of work, special job requirements such as travel, licensure requirements, etc.
 - b. Salary is normally the minimum step for the position, but can be more based on an applicant's background. Interviewers are not authorized to offer salaries above the minimum without prior approval from the OHR.

NOTE: IF AN APPLICANT INDICATES HE OR SHE IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR EMPLOYMENT UNDER THE CONDITIONS DESCRIBED UNDER A AND B, THE INTERVIEW MAY BE ENDED AT THIS POINT AND THE REASON NOTED ON THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RATING SHEET.

- c. Probationary Period. The probationary period for most positions is six months and may be extended to a total probationary period of twelve months. For some positions, the probationary period is longer. Check with the OHR if you are uncertain.
3. Ask each applicant the same questions. It may be necessary to ask follow-up questions to clarify answers.
4. Document the interview. During the interview you will need to take notes on the Interview Questions and Rating Sheet to document the applicant's responses to questions. This should be explained to the applicant at the beginning of the interview. Note-taking is a good way to assure that all relevant interview information is considered when assigning ratings.
5. Criminal History Disclosure Form. At the conclusion of the oral interview, the hiring manager should explain to the applicant that the Department of Health and Senior Services will conduct criminal background checks on all applicants to

whom a contingent offer of employment is made. Explain that you are presenting the applicant with a form that will allow him/her to answer two (2) questions about his/her criminal history and provide an explanation, if applicable. The applicant shall complete the form in its entirety. Should the applicant ask any questions about inclusion of a particular conviction or offense, the hiring manager should direct the applicant to disclose versus exclude. A criminal history does not necessarily preclude employment, but falsification or omission may. If the applicant wishes to provide further explanation of the conviction or offense, he/she may do so on the reverse side of the form as needed.

6. Close the interview. Allow the applicant the opportunity to add any information about his/her qualifications that may have been overlooked. This can be handled by asking, "Is there any information which you think is important that was overlooked?" Ask the applicant if he/she has any further questions regarding the position.
7. Be sure you have a completed and signed DHSS Application for Employment on each applicant as this authorizes the release of information.

SECOND INTERVIEWS

Second interviews are sometimes necessary if a final decision cannot be made from the initial interviews. Normally the top several candidates from the first round are invited back for an additional interview. Second interviews are much less structured and formal. Questions do not need to be approved by the OHR, but they should still be job-related. In addition, there usually is not a rating process for how well the candidates answered the questions. However, it is recommended that you document the responses given to the questions, and what went on during the interview.

SUMMARY

It is the supervisor's responsibility to see that all the information is filled out and included in the packet of information submitted back to the OHR*. Office of Human Resources (OHR) does not review the packets for completeness of information. However, the packets are kept in case questions arise about the conduct of the interview. Please call the OHR if you have questions about any aspect of the interview process.

* Interview packet will consist of:

- Hiring Recommendation / Applicant Status Sheet (*located on intranet under Forms*)
- interview questions with ratings and Criminal Background Disclosure forms
- completed reference check sheets
- copies of sorry letters sent to applicants not interviewed or hired

- copies of certificates relevant to the position
- signed availability or interview letter
- completed and signed DHSS PF-47 Application for Employment
- signed confidentiality statement of interviewers